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NAMB head announces new strategy

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell will propose new strategy, new vice presidents, and a staff reorganization when he meets with NAMB trustees at a board meeting scheduled for Feb. 9 in Alpharetta, Ga.

The meeting comes five months after trustees voted to call Ezell as the entity's president last Sept. 14.

Ezell issued a statement Jan. 28 in advance of the board meeting. "I believe NAMB's strategy needs to revolve around church planting that is focused on penetrating lostness in North America," Ezell said. "We will mobilize churches to become part of this church planting effort. Then we will equip them for the task and help them get it done."

Ezell added, "This national strategy will be implemented regionally, working in close partnership with state Southern Baptist conventions in a way that prioritizes the largest areas of lostness. I am proposing that these five regions — Northeast, South, Midwest, West, and Canada — each have their own leader who will report to me."

Ezell will present trustees with two candidates as regional leaders. Stephen Davis, who has served as executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana since 2003, is to be considered as vice president - Midwest Region.

In addition, Ezell will present Jeff Christopherson as vice president - Canadian Region. Christopherson currently serves in Toronto as a NAMB church planting missionary.

Ezell said he will present two other vice presidential candidates to trustees at the meeting as well, but offered no further information about them.

In addition to presenting new strategy



BIG CHANGES — When he meets with trustees on Feb. 9, North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell will propose a regional approach to NAMB's strategy implementation. (NAMB graphic)

plans and vice presidential candidates to trustees, Ezell will unveil a proposed organizational structure for NAMB that reflects the entity's re-defined priorities.

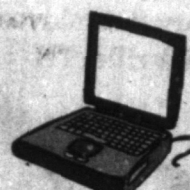
"As I have said over the past months, once we determine our strategy, we will need to realign our organization in a way that will let us best carry out that strategy. I will present that re-structuring to our trustees at February's meeting," he said, adding, "There are not any staffing reductions associated with this re-alignment."

In order to reduce staffing costs and place more money on the mission field, Ezell offered a retirement incentive package to Alpharetta-based NAMB employees in late 2010. Savings from the 99 people who retired or chose a severance package by year's end is estimated to be six million dollars.

Ezell thanked those who have been praying for him and for NAMB and said, "These are exciting times, but also critical days as we forge ahead with what I believe can be a new era of effectiveness for Southern Baptists."



Chickasaw County February 3, 2011 11 AM	Mini Park Corner Main & N. Olive St. Okolona 38860	Panola County February 8, 2011 10 AM	Pavilion on the Square (Downtown) 133 Public Square Batesville 38606	Tallahatchie County February 9, 2011 2 PM	Tallahatchie Co. Courthouse 401 West Court Street Sumner 38957
Chickasaw County February 3, 2011 2 PM	Chickasaw County Courthouse One Pinson Square Houston 38851	Yalobusha County February 8, 2011 Noon	Yalobusha County Courthouse 201 Blackmur Dr Water Valley 38965	Holmes County February 10, 2011 9 AM	Holmes County Courthouse 200 Court Sq Lexington 39095
Montgomery County February 7, 2011 10 AM	Montgomery Co. Courthouse 614 Summit Street Winona 38967	Yalobusha County February 8, 2011 2 PM	Yalobusha County Courthouse 14400 Main St Hwy 330 Coffeeville 38922	Humphreys County February 10, 2011 11 AM	Humphreys County Courthouse 102 Castleman St Belzoni 39038
Carroll County February 7, 2011 Noon	Carroll County Courthouse 600 Lexington St. Carrollton 38917	Grenada County February 9, 2011 10 AM	Grenada County Courthouse 16 1st Street Grenada 38901	Washington County February 10, 2011 2 PM	Greenville City Hall 340 Main St Greenville 38701
Carroll County February 7, 2011 2 PM	Carroll County Courthouse 803 Front St. Vaiden 39176	Tallahatchie County February 9, 2011 Noon	Tallahatchie Admin. Office S Square St Charleston, MS 38921	Attala County February 22, 2011 9 AM	Attala County Courthouse 230 W. Washington St Kosciusko 39090



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Sparkling prayer in Mississippi

Beginning near the birthplace of Mississippi Baptists and finishing in the state's largest metropolitan area, the first month of the three-month Covering Mississippi in Prayer rallies has been completed. There's much more to come.

A full slate of prayer rallies will continue through February and into March. A total of 90 rallies will have been conducted at the conclusion of the campaign — one in every county in Mississippi (some counties have two county seats and therefore two rallies). It appears a daunting task when one studies a map of the state, but we know with God all things are possible.

The concept is unprecedented, but not complicated. The agenda for the rallies is simple. The rallies are not limited to Mississippi Baptists. Rather the call has gone out for all Christians, and those who want to understand what prayer means to Christians, to attend these 30-45 minute rallies in their respective counties.

Most of the rallies are being held outside, usually in a centrally-located public park or on the steps of the local courthouse or city hall. When the weather has not cooperated, rallies have been held inside courtrooms and city board rooms. Some people bring their own seating, but most stand during the short proceedings.

The object, obviously, is to cover all of Mississippi in prayer and to remind ourselves of the importance of prayer in the eyes of God. To that end, rally attendees are invited to participate in the campaign by pledging to pray for Mississippi and the rallies each day before 8 a.m. It has been pointed out that late risers can participate at whatever time they awaken, too.

The contrasts at the rallies are stark at times, and reassuring at other times. It was so cold at a couple of locations that it was difficult to stand still as the winds whipped straight through heavy clothing. It was short-sleeve weather at some of the rallies. It was a typical Mississippi January, in other words.

The Warren County prayer rally was held January 12 on the steps of the Old Courthouse in Vicksburg, now a museum but once a proud symbol of the Old South. The next rally stop was up the road a short distance in Issaquena County and the City of Mayersville, where the first female African-American mayor in the state was elected in 1976.

As a matter of fact, many African-Americans were among the thousands who attended the January rallies. It was heart-



JOINING IN PRAYER — Local residents gather for prayer January 19 on the steps of the Lawrence County Courthouse in Monticello during the Covering Mississippi in Prayer rally. A total of 90 prayer rallies will be held during the three-month campaign to lead Mississippians to pray for revival in their state. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

warming to see Mississippians of all colors and classes and social standing join hands to pray for revival in our state.

Truly, there is more that unites us than separates us. The prayer rallies have proven that. Surely God has been pleased to see all His children come together to lift up each other in the name of His Son and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

If you missed the rally in your local area, don't despair. There's probably a rally scheduled for February or March in a nearby county within driving distance. Check the calendar printed elsewhere in this issue of The Baptist Record, or visit www.mbcb.org. It's worth the effort to get there.

Only God knows where the next Great Awakening will begin, but this much we do know — if we're prayed up and ready in Mississippi, it can start right here. That's a breathtaking thought, isn't it?

GUEST OPINION:



Speaking truth has become unspeakable

By Paul Brewster
Madison, Indiana

who has not accepted Jesus Christ as their savior, I'm telling you, you're not my brother and you're not my sister, and I want to be your brother.

Not that long ago, it would have been quickly recognized that the governor was using the family imagery of the New Testament. This metaphor for salvation flows from a central doctrine of the Christian faith: that everyone needs to be regenerated, or "born again." Bentley was echoing the words and theology of John the Apostle, who wrote: "But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

The reaction that followed Gov. Bentley's remarks indicates almost no trace of recogni-

tion of the biblical background for his comments. Jewish groups said they felt "disenfranchised" by his words. An American Hindu group said the words were "intolerant, repulsive and wholly unacceptable." David Silverman, representing American Atheists, said Bentley's words were "disgusting and bigoted and reinforce Alabama's reputation for being backward and bigoted."

This is the single most scandalous teaching of Christianity today. We preach that salvation is available to all, but only through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross. An ABC News article reported that the local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League centered their criticism on exactly this basis. Bill Nigut, the ADL's regional spokesperson, said: "On the day that he is sworn in as governor, he's

sending a statement to the public saying, if you're not Christian, you can't be with me. From our point of view, that is proselytizing for Christianity and comes very close to a violation of the First Amendment."

Bentley has since apologized for giving offense with his words. Perhaps he realized that when there is no biblical literacy, there would be no way to explain his comments — but the truth that salvation is exclusively found in Jesus still remains and the cross will continue to be a stumbling block to the pride of men.

As a Christian, I am happy to be a fellow American with Jews, Hindus, atheists and more, but I do believe in the necessity of the new birth.

The great evangelist George Whitefield was reportedly criticized for always preaching on but one theme — the new birth. Perhaps it is time Christians in America return to that emphasis today. Accepted or rejected, Jesus still spoke the truth when He said, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Brewster is pastor of Ryker's Ridge Church in Madison, Ind. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

Studies: some churches embrace high tech

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Churches are turning increasingly to social networking tools as ministry aids and Facebook is by far the most popular tool, according to a new study by LifeWay Research.

The survey of 1,003 Protestant congregations was conducted in September and sponsored by LifeWay's Digital Church partner, Fellowship Technologies. It found that 47% of churches actively use Facebook.

The second most popular way of networking is through the tools included in church management software packages, actively used by 20% of congregations. Three percent use MySpace, two percent a church-specific package like Cobblestone, Unifyer, or The City, and one percent use Ning.

However, a full 40% of churches do not use any social networking tools.

"Churches are natural places of interaction," LifeWay Research Director Scott McConnell said. "Congregations are rapidly adopting social networking, not only to speed their own communication, but also to interact with people outside their church."

Large churches use Facebook far more than small ones. Eighty-one percent of congregations with 500 or more in average worship attendance use Facebook, compared to 27% of churches with one to 49 attendees. Forty-three percent of churches with 50-99 attendees use Facebook, as do 46% of churches with 100-199 attendees and 56% of churches with 200-499 attendees.

Large-city and suburban churches are more likely than their small-city and rural counterparts to use Facebook. While 57% of suburban and 54% of large-city churches use it, only 46% of small-city congregations and 39% of rural churches are on Facebook.

Among churches that utilize social networking tools, 73% use them for interacting with the congregation, 70% for distributing news and information in an "outbound only" manner, 52% for fostering member-to-member interaction and 41% for managing the church's group ministry.

A majority (62%) of churches that utilize social networking tools use them to interact with individuals outside the congregation.

"Social networking tools have become an integral part of most people's daily lives and relationships," said Curtis Simmons, vice president for marketing and community at Fellowship Technologies. "If churches desire to connect with their congregation and community in meaningful ways, then they need to estab-

lish a strategy for actively engaging in the social media conversation." Thousands of individuals are sharing support and encouragement through these tools. The church needs to be an active participant in these conversations and connections.

A separate LifeWay Research survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors in October 2010 found that many pastors are personally using social media to interact with their congregations. Nearly half (46%) of pastors personally use Facebook, 16% blog and six percent use Twitter. In addition, 84% send e-mail to groups.

"Biblical community requires feet and faces, not only retweets and fan pages," McConnell cautioned, "but clearly social networking is a helpful tool to build and maintain community."

In addition, though most churches have a website, there is a divide between congregations that use their sites only for one-way communication and those that maximize their online presence with interactive technology.

That is the finding of a new LifeWay Research study sponsored by Axletree Media, another of LifeWay's partners in its Digital Church initiative designed to enhance delivery systems and keep up with the digital needs of the church.

The survey of 1,003 Protestant churches in September 2010 found that while 78% have a website, less than half of those congregations use their sites for interactive purposes like obtaining and distributing prayer requests (43%), registering people for events and activities (39%) and automating more church processes (30%).

A majority of congregations with a website use it for one-way communication, the survey revealed. A full 91% provide information to potential visitors online and 79% provide information to the congregation. Fifty-seven percent encourage increased attendance and involvement among the congregation and 52% solicit interest in ministry or volunteer opportunities.

"Many churches are using their website like a Yellow Pages ad characterized by basic information and infrequent updates," said McConnell. "This is in sharp contrast with churches that use their website like a bustling church receptionist registering people for upcoming events, collecting prayer requests and obtaining volunteers."

"There is nothing wrong with using a church website to simply give directions to the church or state the church's beliefs," McConnell added. "However, we must



realize that more and more people expect to be able to interact online without having to drive or make a phone call to the church."

Larger churches are more likely than their smaller counterparts to use their websites interactively. Among churches with a website, 69% of churches with 500 or more in average worship attendance register people for events or activities online, but only 25% of churches with one to 49 attendees do the same. Fifty-two percent of congregations with 500 or more attendees seek to use their website to "allow more processes at (their) church to be automated," compared with 15% of churches with one to 49 attendees.

In contrast, large and small churches are about equally likely to use their websites to provide information to potential visitors. There is also little difference between large and small churches using their websites to provide information to their congregation.

The study also found differences in the frequency of website usage. Forty percent of churches with websites update their sites once a week and 15% update more than once a week. Nearly half of churches with websites (42%) update them

only once a month or less. That includes seven percent that update once a year or less.

Among the factors that keep churches from providing more content and services online are limited time among church staff (46%), limited financial resources (41%), limited time among volunteers (39%) and little interest expressed by the congregation for more online content or services (35%).

Bill Nix, CEO of Axletree Media, lamented that more churches do not take advantage of online ministry resources. "With the low cost of online technology today, any size congregation can build and maintain a helpful website. Plus, updating a website has become so easy that no church needs to feel like it lacks the technological savvy to have a presence on the Internet."

Digital photos are the most common technology utilized among churches with websites and the only technology used by a majority of those congregations. Eighty-two percent use digital photos in their online ministries, 47% use digital audio files or podcasts, 31% utilize digital video files, 26% use text messaging, and 26% of congregations use blogs.

Looking back

10 years ago

Betty Davis is elected Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union president at the 2001 Mississippi WMU Annual Missions Celebration at Country Woods Church, Byram.

20 years ago

Floy Jacob, the second-oldest living missionary currently on the retiree rolls of the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board, passes the century mark when she celebrates her 100th birthday Jan. 18 in West Point. She was born in 1891 in Franklin, Ky.

30 years ago

The leading Mississippi church in per capita baptisms for 1960 was Okolona Church, Carnation, with 169 members and 76 baptisms; and leading in total baptisms is First Church, Columbia, with 2,228 members and 133 baptisms.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

BIBLIOPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004
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EPY ST FLS XLJ HAPS AP

BX YPFUYPO, B LF

YPFUYPO TQ RTO; QTW

RTO NLSSTY MP YPFUY-

PO HBYA PGBE,

SPBYAPW YPFUYPYA AP

LSJ FLS.

CLFPX TSP: YABWYPPS

Clue: Y = T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hebrews Twelve: Twenty-Eight.

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PRAYER POINTS - AS SIMPLE AS ABC

As thousands of Mississippi Baptists join together every morning to begin their day in prayer, we are encouraging people to follow a simple formula. In reality, it is not simple at all. We are asking people to pray for self, for servants, and for souls. If we take the time to spend a few minutes with the Lord, He will broaden our understanding of what these areas mean and make personal application of them for each one of us.

For instance, just look at self. We can be much like the Psalmist, who prayed and said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24). God will begin to open windows of new insights and open doors of new opportunities for every one of us. It is as simple as ABC. Now usually when you hear that something is as simple as ABC, it is not simple. This may not be either, but as you look at you, own life, your own walk with God, and put your own needs before Him, how do you go about talking to Him and listening to Him about areas of your life? Let me suggest to you that you simply follow the ABCs. You may find that God will open up areas and arenas of life that need to be either evaluated or altered.

How do you go about this? Well, I have neither the space nor do I need to make all of these applications, but what if you begin to pray one day at a time about A, then B, then C, then D, etc. You could use a prayer journal to write down the areas and the issues that God brings to your heart about self. For example, what if one day when you are praying about self you simply look at the "A" issues.

For me, I have written down a pretty long list of "A" things that I have asked God to help me with, speak to me about, and show me. Because of space, I cannot give you the whole list, but just think about these in your self-prayer time.

Actions - As you begin to think about the actions, the external things that are seen, things you do that are fleshed out, and lived out by you and seen by others that often times engage others, are there actions that need to be changed? There may be some actions you need to stop and others you need to start that involve you serving the Lord. Maybe there is something that

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Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Prayer Points

God has been leading you to do, a work in your church, a ministry that He wants you to initiate, or an expression that He wants you to carry out. Our actions say a lot about us and are one of the things that people notice most about us. So we need to keep them open before God so that He will be able to shape us and use us through all that we do.

Attitudes - If you begin to pray about them, you will quickly recognize that this is a different level of thought and prayer. Our attitudes live beneath the surface of our skin. They are heart issues and often what people see on the outside is not what we know is on the inside. During this past year, someone came to me and told me that God had given him a totally new attitude. I had no idea what he was talking about so I asked him to explain. He said it had to do with his church. There were some new things that were started and some old things that were not receiving the attention he thought they should. By this person's confession and not by my estimation his attitude had gotten really bad.

One Sunday morning, he sat looking around at the congregation. The place was filled with people worshipping and he realized his attitude was probably the worst in the building. He was mad at the new things that had been start-

ed. He was mad because of some of the songs they were singing. He was ill-spirited toward some people in the congregation, and he realized he had developed a bad attitude about everything. While others were singing and worshipping the Lord, this wonderful saint with an open heart was saying, "Create within me a new attitude." A dozen people could have taken a club, gun, or twisted an arm and could not have made him change his attitude, but God could. Maybe there is something within you as within all of us that the Lord would like to deal with about attitude.

Anxieties - The Scripture says, "Be anxious for nothing" (Phil. 4:6). Do not let worry beat you down. Yet we seem to be worrying about something constantly. I am not referring to just giving attention to issues in life, I am talking about worry that paralyzes you, grips your heart, keeps you awake, ruins your health, and disturbs everything. While there are things that you may be able to deal with and address, the real cure for anxiety is not just a pill or changing circumstances, but it is trusting God. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28-29). God wants to deal with our anxieties.

Let me give you this one last "A" though the list may be longer. **Arguments** - Are there occasions when you have engaged someone in conversation at home, work, or church and you have gotten into a disagreement? Then it becomes much more, it is an argument. It is fine to disagree with people. However, it is not always Christ honoring or Christ-like to lace your words and allow your emotions to reshape your Christian life and express it in your demeanor resulting, in an argument.

When you pray for self and begin to look at those things that you were personally involved in throughout the day over how someone thinks, drives a car, or the way you felt slighted in the treatment that you received, you can still respond in a caring way that will be worthy of your walk with the Lord. That is certainly not all of the "A" words that you could examine and you may want to spend a day or a week walking through those and letting God speak to your heart. That is only the beginning of the alphabet. On another day or another week, it may be that God wants you to look at the "B" areas of self and let Him deal with them. Then you can move to the "C" and the "D" and you are just beginning.

Simple? Not at all, but it can be life-changing as you let Jesus come in and be the wonderful saving Lord in every area of your life.

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MS POSITIONS

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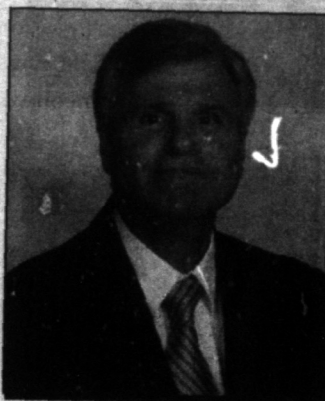
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AUBURN BAPTIST CHURCH IN TUPELO, MS is currently accepting resumes for the position of part-time Minister of Music. Resumes can be sent to 1138 Cty Rd. 931, Tupelo, MS 38804 or emailed to jhenry@auburnbaptistchurch.org. The churches phone number is (662)842-5638.



2. WCU mission trip



4. Moser

1. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission since 1988, will speak to hundreds of Mississippi College students during a February 15th chapel program at First Church Clinton. The program begins at 10:50 a.m.

2. An eight-member team of William Carey University (WCU) staff and students participated in a mission trip to Kenya from Dec. 26, 2010 through Jan. 9, 2011. The group worked in collabor-



7. Cummings

ration with a local Christian rock band called Flight From Below. Shown, from left to right, are Mark Wheat, Flight From Below's drummer and a Presbyterian Christian High School student; Chandan Bangar, Flight From Below's guitarist and a Northeast Jones High School student; Whitney Hunt, a WCU student from Franklinton, LA; Daniel Maqueda, Flight From Below's bassist and a WCU student from Hattiesburg; Marshall McKellar, Flight From Below's vocalist and a

STAFF CHANGES

1. Mt. Zion Church, Osyka, has called Kyle Spinks, Slaughter, La., as pastor effective Jan. 2. Shown are Spinks, his wife Tammy, and children Brooke, Autumn, and Gauge.



1. The Spinks

COLLEGE NEWS

Belmont student; Stephanie Pendergrass, a WCU student from Hattiesburg; Tammy Dossett, the administrative assistant for the academic affairs office at WCU; and Misha Nielsen, a JSM student.

3. Lorie Watkins Fulton, assistant professor of language and literature at William Carey University, had her first book, entitled William Faulkner, Gavin Stevens, and the Cavalier Tradition, published in January 2011. In the book, published by Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York, Fulton focuses on how Faulkner uses his most frequent narrator, Gavin Stevens, to voice his political opinions and criticize the Southern social and political structure created by the class he belongs to himself.

4. Jack Moser, a member of the Blue Mountain College faculty for more than 20 years, has been named the college's Dean of Enrollment Services and Student Life/Dean of Students. His appointment was effective Jan. 1. Moser, associate professor of physical education and assistant men's basketball coach, filled the position when Becky Bennett retired Dec. 31 after more than 31 years at BMC.

5. One faculty member, one staff member and six students from William Carey University will present their work at the 2011 Mississippi Philological Association (MPA) annual conference February 18 and 19 at Jackson State University. Allison Chestnut, associate professor of language and literature, will present her essay, Sally Parker Sash, Emily Grierson and the Spinsters' Guide to Subversive Citizenship. Chestnut has been on the faculty at WCU for 18 years and teaches a vari-

ety of literature and writing classes. Jeanna Graves, the administrative assistant for the department of theatre and communication and a graduate student, will present Eco-critical Analysis of Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher. Graves has worked at WCU for 15 years. Students who will present their work at MPA are Thomas Duke of Florence; Sarah Etheridge of Hattiesburg; Berquin Fesee of Purvis; Leslie Susan Hammond of Mendenhall; Angelia Logan of Petal; and Deanna Roberts of Meridian.

6. Pavel Urruchi, a senior religion major and Spanish minor at WCU from Lima, Peru, served as the interpreter for the Pastor's Conference in the Baptist Churches in Lima, Peru January 3-7. Mark Tolbert, associate professor of Evangelism and pastoral ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS), and Chuck Kelley, president of NOBTS, led the conference. Urruchi's wife Leah is the interim assistant Baptist Student Union director at WCU.

7. Lisa Cummings, associate professor of psychology on the William

Carey University Tradition campus, was named as the Clinical Mental Health Counselor of the Year at the Mississippi Counseling Association 60th Annual Conference Awards Luncheon. The Mississippi Counselor Association is composed of credentialed, professional counselors who work to promote positive development and adjustments among the children and adults whom they serve.

8. The Office of Continuing Education at Mississippi College will sponsor new medical training programs. Classes begin March 29 at the new Flowood Center. MC will sponsor the courses in partnership with Consolidated Curriculum. The courses include Pharmacy Technician, EKG Technician, Medical Administration Assistant Program and Medical Billing & Coding. For more information or to register, please call the MC Office of Continuing Education at (601) 925-3301.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



2. Westfall ordination



3. Providence Church, Grenada County



4. Mt. Olive Church, Baldwyn



5. Park Haven Church, Laurel



1. South 28th Avenue Church, Hattiesburg, will celebrate 70 years of service to the Hattiesburg area with many activities and a web site established for the public to watch them grow. Visit www.south28.webs.com for information.

2. New Prospect Church, Olive Branch, ordained its associate/student pastor, Scott Westfall, to the gospel ministry Jan. 16. Westfall was presented an ordination certificate and a John McArthur study Bible. Shown are Rachel Westfall, Westfall, and pastor Bob Curtis.

3. The children's choir of Providence Church, Grenada County, sang during the worship service Dec. 5. Shown are Kelsey Lane, Jackson Jenkins, Leah Briscoe, James Darren McKee, Sadie Rose Williams, Alexandra Kerr, Dakota Jenkins, and Brian McAdams.

4. Mt. Olive Church, Baldwyn, held a note burning service Nov. 11, 2010, on their Harvest Day signifying paying off their sanctuary. David Haynes, pastor. Shown are the participants.

5. Park Haven Church, Laurel, had their annual Christmas candlelight service. Shown are some of the participants.

6. Wynndale Church, Terry, recently held a revival for senior adult emphasis month. Participants, shown, include Graham Smith, Stan Buckley, Eva Hart, Jerry Smith, and Barry Burds.

7. Southside Church, Yazoo County, held its first baby dedication Nov. 21, 2010. Shown are Darrin, Danielle, and baby Emma Threet; and Audra, Tim, and baby Maddie Chisolm.

8. The Children in Action of Fellowship Church, Taylorsville, led evening worship services Jan. 23. Katie Atwood gave her testimony. Colton Knight led the song service, and Caleb Bass led the congregation in prayer. Shown are the participants.

9. Fellowship Acts of Disciples Drama team of Fellowship Church, Ellisville, put on drama skits for Sanctity of Human Life. The skits were about the unborn child, miscarriages, abortion, and the elderly. Shown are the participants.



6. Wynndale Church, Terry



7. Southside Church, Yazoo County



8. Fellowship Church, Taylorsville



9. Fellowship Church, Ellisville

JUST FOR THE RECORD



12. River Bend Church, Aberdeen



13. Carpenter ordination



14. Goodwater Church, Enterprise

10. Mount Manna Church, Coldwater, will host Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames on February 20 at 6 p.m., and February 21 thru 22 at 7 p.m. For more information visit www.realityoutreachministries.org/intro.html

11. First Church Days, Lake Cormorant, is holding an open door prayer day on February 5, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Christians are called to a commitment to solemn prayer and praise to God. There will be a Bible reading on the quarter hour.

12. The widows of River Bend Church, Aberdeen, were honored with a luncheon and entertainment by Abbey Swartzendruber, right, and Gracie Swartzendruber, left, who played violins and sang some old hymns.

13. Crossroads Church, Petal, ordained Paul A. Carpenter Jan. 9. Shown, from left, are pastor Jimmie L. Windham, Marsha Carpenter, Carpenter, and John Patterson.

14. The children's choir of Goodwater Church, Enterprise, presented the musical program Fear Not Factor Dec. 12, 2010 at the church and again at Central Grove Church Dec. 19. Shown are the participants.

15. Simmons Memorial Church, Flora, held a baby dedication Dec. 12, 2010, for Brianna Ranae Douglas. She is shown with her par-



15. Douglas dedication



16. Sawyer dedication

ents Chad and Sylena and siblings Preston, Edie Grace, and Landon.

16. First Church, Boyle, held a baby dedication service Jan. 16 for Emma Grace Sawyer. Shown are pastor Clarence Edwards and parents Jonathan and Ashley Sawyer.



Sweeping investigation underway of church, ministry taxes

WASHINGTON (BP) — In a move that could have a major impact on the tax status of churches and pastors, an independent national commission of religious and financial experts will review several church-related tax issues such as the limitations of the pastoral housing allowance and the IRS' power to investigate churches and issue its recommendations to U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa.

The commission, formed by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) at the request of Grassley, will examine church-related tax issues in the wake of a mostly unsuccessful Grassley investigation into the financial records of six television ministries, most of whom have ties to what is known as the "health and wealth gospel."

At least some of them have been accused of using donor money to live luxurious lifestyles. Because they label themselves as churches, the ministries are tax-exempt and not required to submit detailed financial information to the Internal Revenue Service. Grassley, who began his probe in 2007, maintained from the start that his probe had nothing to do with doctrine but instead focused on whether donor money was being used for "legitimate, non-profit purposes."

Grassley, a Republican, released the results of his investigation Jan. 6, a day after he sent a letter to the ECFA asking it to provide input "on how to address these issues" and "to help facilitate discussion on whether these issues can be addressed without legislation."

"Self-correction," he said, would be best. The ranking GOP member of the Senate Finance Committee, Grassley said in a separate statement that "legislation should be the last resort."

Two of the ministries — those of Joyce Meyer and Benny Hinn — complied with Grassley's staff and "have undertaken significant internal governance reforms," Grassley said. Four ministries either didn't comply at all or supplied incomplete information: the ministries of Randy and Paula White, Eddie Long, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, and Creflo and Taffi Dollar.

Even though much of the Christian community views the health and wealth gospel as unbiblical, the ministries' alleged abuses could impact

every church in the country. The health and wealth teaching asserts that the Bible promises physical and financial blessings to followers of Christ. Critics say such teachings wrongly equate God's promises of blessing with temporal, materialistic success.

Grassley's staff wrote in a summary memo that the four ministries have "multiple for-profit and non-profit entities related to each church" and that the use of "private airports and aircraft leasing companies ... raises concerns about the use of the church's tax-exempt status to avoid taxation."

"However, given the four churches' refusal to provide tax information, we are unable to determine whether and the extent to which they are reporting and paying taxes on income earned in those entities."

ECFA President Dan Busby said "based on a career of working with non-profit organizations" he is "convinced the reported practices are not pervasive." Formed in 1979, ECFA is an organization comprised of ministries that pledge to follow established standards for financial accountability, fundraising and board governance. Of the six ministries, only Joyce Meyer's ministry is a member.

The Commission on Accountability and Policy for Religious Organizations will be led by Michael Batts, a CPA and an ECFA board member. It will receive no government money.

The commission will also examine the current IRS prohibition on church involvement in political campaigns.

There is no timetable yet for the completion of the report.

Blue Mountain College's Bennett retires after 31 years

BLUE MOUNTAIN, Ms. (Special) — Becky Bennett wasn't quite sure what she was getting into back in 1979, and she can't quite figure out where the past 31 years have gone. She's sure of one thing: "It's been fun. It's always been fun."

Bennett, vice president for enrollment services and student life and dean of students at Baptist-affiliated Blue Mountain College (BMC) in Blue Mountain, retired after more than 31 years on Dec. 31. Jack Moser, a member of the BMC faculty for more than 20 years, was named to replace her, effective Jan. 1.

"It's just time," she said. "I guess it's biblical, from Ecclesiastes. There's a time to every purpose and it's just time."

During Bennett's tenure, BMC has evolved from a women's college with male ministerial students to a completely co-educational institution. This fall, the school hit a record enrollment of 550 students; all its residential spaces are filled and there's a waiting list. Through it all, Bennett's involvement has been significant — first as dean of students and later as an administrator and member of the President's Cabinet.

Bennett grew up in Oxford and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Mississippi in Oxford. After teaching elementary school for seven years in Lafayette and Panola counties, she worked for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson for nearly two years.

In 1979, she got a phone call from Gerald Fowler, BMC director of admissions, asking if she would interview for admissions recruiter. "Even though I went to Ole Miss, I'd known about BMC all my life and I loved the school," she said.

Still, she was happy working in the Baptist Building in Jackson and not particularly interested in being a recruiter. "I wasn't sure where God was leading me," she said. "I just figured I would see where it would take me."

She met with Fowler and Harold Fisher, BMC's president. When she turned

down the recruiting job Fisher said, "Well, I have another job I want to talk to you about — dean of students."

"I was floored," Bennett said. "It was a total surprise." She accepted and never looked back.

"It's been a blast," Bennett said. "It's been wonderful. The students at BMC have just been super. They can amaze you; they can surprise you. Yes, sometimes they can disappoint you but that's when you can really make a big difference in their lives."

Bennett has made enough difference in enough BMC students' lives that the Board of Trustees recently named her dean of students emerita.

"That was something special," she said. "That's something I'll always cherish."

"Becky Bennett has invested in the lives of Blue Mountain College students for over thirty years," said Betty Rogers Coward, BMC president. "There is no way to measure the impact of her long and distinguished career."

Bennett said she has been fortunate to work for two different BMC administrations. "Both Dr. Fisher and Dr. Coward have been first rate presidents who have allowed me opportunities to grow in so many ways," she said. "I could never thank them enough."

Bennett is optimistic about the future of Blue Mountain College. "I've always said BMC is a truly Christian college, in name and in practice. God



HONORING RETIREMENT — Becky Bennett (second from left) was recently recognized by the Blue Mountain College (BMC) Board of Trustees for her 31-plus years as vice president for enrollment services and student life, and dean of students. Bennett retired Dec. 31. With her are Mike Staten (left), chair of the BMC Board of Trustees; Betty Rogers Coward (second from right), BMC president; and Jack Bennett, Becky's husband and pastor of Mt. Moriah Church in Ripley. (BMC photo)

has a real purpose for a Christian college in north Mississippi and I'm glad Mississippi Baptists have supported us and continue to support us. As long as we are that instrument of change that God has called us to be, this college will be fine."

"People ask me all the time how we make it, being a small college in an even smaller town, and I just scratch my head and say, 'I don't know but we keep on going and keep on growing so it must be God's will.'"

Bennett and her husband Jack, pastor at Mt. Moriah Church in Ripley, will spend a lot of time on their farm in Tiptah County. "I'll probably try to be

a better pastor's wife," she said, chuckling a bit, "but basically I'm going to just play it by ear and by heart."

She knows there will be some separation anxiety, but she's prepared for it. "Between the students and my colleagues at Blue Mountain, I've been blessed," she said. "The best people in the world are found on this hill."

Moser has served BMC as associate professor of physical education and assistant men's basketball coach.

"Jack Moser knows the very heart and soul of Blue Mountain College, and he has demonstrated unwavering commitment to our students' welfare during his tenure here," Coward said.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE God Loves the Unlovely

Hosea 1:1-3:5

By Becky Brown

God asked Noah to build a boat. God asked Abraham to travel without a flight plan. God asked Moses to stand toe to toe with Pharaoh. God asked David to slay a giant. God asked Elijah to challenge King Ahab and his less than lovely wife Jezebel. God asked Ezekiel to eat a scroll and to shave his head and his beard and to lose his precious wife without shedding one tear. Approximately seven hundred years before Christ was born, God asked his prophet Hosea to marry a prostitute. As soon as this news hit the streets in the nation of Israel, gossip columnists were having a field day. Hosea's church council and personnel committee were holding closed door meetings with the WMU. Something surely must be done about

Gomer's Pile of Sin, but certainly NOT this.

His name was Hosea. Her name was Gomer. His name meant salvation. Her name meant to come to an end, to cease and to fail. Thank goodness, her name also meant to finish, to arrive and to come to perfect completion. That part always makes me smile. Gomer (Mrs. Hosea) had a pile of sin and so do I. God sent a man named Salvation to bring her home. God sent His Son named Salvation to bring me home. God loved Gomer. God loves me. God loves you, too. You may deny or ignore or even reject the outrageous love of God, but you can't stop it. He will pursue you up and down any road from the majestic snow-tipped mountain straight down into the filth of your most recent gutter.



Brown

Through thirty-plus years of teaching Sunday School, I have heard many people say that the Old Testament is boring, dusty, ancient and irrelevant. That says one thing to me: they have probably never even read it. So sad. The whole Old Testament is a billboard message with an arrow pointing directly to Jesus. With the lives of Hosea and Gomer, God was drawing a picture of Calvary. For God to love us enough to give the life of His Son in our place is incomprehensible. Hosea helped draw the picture of this love of God as he reached out to a lady who, for the most part, refused his love. God loves the unlovely.

This is the first of four lessons from the book of Hosea. Chapters one through three describe the shock and awe of the relationship between Hosea and Gomer. The major character in the drama of this book is God. A major key word is har-

lot or harlotry, appearing eighteen times.

God's people Israel had forsaken Him. He had given them birth, loved them and set them apart as a nation that was blessed in order to be a blessing. He preserved them through four hundred years of bondage in Egypt. He delivered them by His great and mighty power. When they rejected Him, He led them through forty years in the wilderness with full provision. Moses brought them out of Egypt. Joshua led them into Canaan. God gave them the land of promise. Judges drew them back to God over yet another four hundred year period of their history. When they chose earthly kings to rule on their thrones, He gave them kings and prophets to call them back to Himself. In spite of the faithfulness of God, Israel had turned her collective national back on Him. Hosea was one of many prophets God used to draw them back into His arms of love and provision.

Gomer gave birth to three children in the home of Hosea. The first was a son named Judgement. The second was a daughter named No More Compassion. The third was a son named No Longer My People. Even through the names of these children, God was crying out to the people of Israel: "Judgement is coming! Stop what you are doing! Why do you reject my deep love? Come back to me now! Your 'People of God' card is about to expire!"

The role of God's prophets is always to woo people back into His purposes. Hosea's broken heart in his own home and with his own wife was a micro image of how deeply God must grieve when we reject His love. Spiritual adultery will eclipse physical adultery every time. Another key word in this book is redemption. God is Gomer's Redeemer. Thank goodness, God also redeems him.

Brown is staff evangelist at First Church, Richland.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE Danger! Unbridled Passion

2 Kings 9:16, 21b-22; 10:15-19, 30-32

By Dr. W. Wayne VanHorn

The word "passion" is used in many ways. Some use the word in a romantic sense, noting how a husband and wife are passionately in love. Some use the word with an older nuance to refer to suffering, as in Christ's passion (Acts 1:3; KJV). Often the term is used in reference to a strong drive to accomplish something. Coaches encourage athletes to have passion for the game. An actress is said to have a passion for the art. What is your passion?

This week's lesson focuses upon Jehu's passion, a general who became king over Israel in 841 B.C. Jehu had a passion for life. He was an accomplished soldier. The Lord anointed him king and used him to eradicate Baalism from Israel. We learn in this week's lesson, passion can be a positive force for needed change in society. So,

why the title, "Danger! Unbridled Passion," for this lesson? We will see that Jehu took matters too far in some cases. The goal of this lesson is to encourage a passion to serve the Lord while maintaining a faithfulness to His ways. Unbridled passion does more harm than good.

Elisha sent a young prophet to Jehu, who was garrisoned with the troops of Israel in the city of Ramoth-Gilead, on the eastern side of Jordan. The young man anointed Jehu with oil and delivered the God-given mandate to bring judgment on the house of Ahab. King Ahab himself was dead. However, he and his wife Jezebel had illegally confiscated Naboth's vineyard, had established Baalism in Israel, and had killed many of the Lord's prophets. Ahab's grandson, Joram, was king at this time. Jehu rushed to Jezreel



VanHorn

to kill Joram. His unbridled passion for life is seen in his chariot driving. The watchman in Jezreel said, "he drives like a madman" (2 Kings 9:20; NIV). By killing Joram, the dynasty begun by Omri, Ahab's father, came to an abrupt end.

What about Baalism? Baalism was a false religion venerating Baal, the storm god, who brought rain for the crops. Baal's female consort, Asherah, was thought to ensure the fecundity of the land. When Ahab married Jezebel, a foreigner, she brought along her false gods. Altars were erected, and prophets and priests of Baal and Asherah were installed. Cult prostitutes enacted a sexual ritual thought to appease Baal and Asherah and guarantee the fertility of the soil and the success of the harvest.

God sent prophets to speak against this heresy. At the height of Baalism, Jezebel had the prophets of the Lord put to death. Through Jehu, God

brought judgment on Ahab, Jezebel, and Baalism. Jehu was so passionate about eradicating Baalism, he gathered all the advocates of Baal together under pretense of a great feast in Baal's honor. Jehu then killed everyone who showed up. Baalism was "destroyed" in Israel" (2 Kings 10:18-28; NIV).

What about Jehu's excesses? He killed 42 men who were relatives of Ahaziah and not included in the Lord's judgment (2 Kings 10:13-14). He eradicated Baalism, but stopped short of eradicating the false worship instituted by Jeroboam, Israel's first king. Jeroboam had erected alternative shrines at Dan and Bethel, had chosen non-Levitical priests, and had established feasts days at times other than what the Lord commanded. This rival religion was designed to dissuade the men of Israel from going to Jerusalem for the great feasts and possibly returning their loyalties to David's descendants. Did Jehu use his passion to maintain this idolatrous cult for fear of losing his newly gained kingdom (2 Kings

10:29, 31-35)? Jehu was commended for his dismantling of the infrastructure supporting Baalism in Israel, but he was censured because, "He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam" (2 Kings 10:31; NIV).

What about you? Do you have a passion to serve the Lord? Too often those who profess Christ are passionate about everything else. Those who do seem to be passionate for the Lord often fail to control their passion by staying grounded in the Scriptures and guided by the Holy Spirit. Believers need to heed the sign, "Danger! Unbridled Passion." Unbridled passion for things of this world destroys our witness for Christ; unbridled passion for Christ, can result in us doing things in Jesus' name that He never called us to do. Let's develop a passion for Christ that is informed by the Bible, empowered by the Spirit, and effective in honoring Jesus.

Van Horn is Dean of Christian Studies and the Arts at Mississippi College.

SBC Committee on Order of Business moves to streamline annual meeting

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Changes are in store for the 2011 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Phoenix, including two missionary appointment services, fewer business sessions, and no night sessions in hopes that more people will participate. The chairman of SBC Committee on Order of Business said on Jan. 28.

Proposed changes include trimming the program to morning and afternoon business sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 14-15, and scheduling missionary appointment services for both of the convention's two mission boards, said Will Langford, pastor of Great Bridge Church in Chesapeake, Va.

"The Committee on the Order of Business has been working diligently with SBC President Bryant Wright to make adjustments to the 2011 Annual SBC Convention Program," Langford said in a statement released to Baptist Press.

"Proposed changes include trimming down the number of program items so as to better emphasize the Great Commission work of the SBC entities and missionaries," Langford said. "Changes to the program will consolidate the meeting into four sessions that will be morning and afternoon sessions on both Tuesday and Wednesday without unduly restricting seminary and other special luncheon time.

The evening sessions will be eliminated."

The committee believes eliminating the evening sessions and trimming the program items will enhance participation and free up time for messengers and guests for fellowship, discussions, and family, Langford said.

Also, it is the desire of the committee that the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board will be able to include missionary commissioning services as part of their reports, thereby enhancing the experience of the missionary, the messenger, the mission entities, and lifting up the Great Commission emphasis," Langford said.

"By these changes we seek to promote greater attendance and participation in our annual meeting, and in providing this general preview the hope that anyone who has not yet made plans to attend might be encouraged by these new enhancements to do so," Langford noted. "These are high bars to hurdle, and we are still working on details, but feel confident that when we announce the program on the traditional date of May 1, the new format will be one that is well-received by the vast majority of Southern Baptists."

Stan Buckley, pastor of First Church, Jackson, currently serves on the committee.

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News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcc.org.



HONOR ROLL OF CHURCHES

Each January we evaluate the cash gifts received by The Baptist Children's Village during the previous twelve months. In this evaluation, it has become customary to list the Mississippi Baptist churches in descending order of total cash gifts. This does not include non-cash gift items or volunteer efforts that many churches contribute. This evaluation and analysis has become known as the "Honor Roll of Churches."

Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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RANK	CHURCH NAME	CITY	2009 GIFTS
1	Immanuel Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$33,724.01
2	Morrison Heights Baptist Church	Clinton	\$25,804.79
3	Bunker Hill Baptist Church	Columbia	\$24,043.88
4	First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$24,043.88
5	First Baptist Church	Water Valley	\$22,113.50
6	First Baptist Church	Jackson	\$18,566.63
7	Brandon Baptist Church	Brandon	\$14,274.96
8	First Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$14,140.94
9	First Baptist Church	Madison	\$13,995.38
10	First Baptist Church	Corinth	\$13,045.09
11	Seminary Baptist Church	Quitman	\$12,535.00
12	First Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$12,440.24
13	Wayne Baptist Association	Waynesboro	\$11,525.18
14	Trinity First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$11,309.69
15	First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$10,393.59
16	Parkway Baptist Church	Brandon	\$10,393.59
17	First Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$10,229.78
18	Oak Grove Baptist Church	Mendenhall	\$10,158.73
19	East Philadelphia Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$9,979.01
20	Williamsville Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$9,979.01
21	Bel Aire Baptist Church	Gulfport	\$9,979.01
22	Fellowship Baptist Church	Meridian	\$9,979.01
23	Murphy Creek Baptist Church	Meridian	\$9,979.01
24	Liberty Baptist Church	Louisville	\$9,541.28
25	Memorial Baptist Church	Liberty	\$9,446.13
26	Rienzi Baptist Church	Richmon	\$9,220.20
27	First Baptist Church	Rienzi	\$8,805.63
28	First Baptist Church, Runnelstown	Newton	\$8,757.88
29	First Baptist Church	Petal	\$8,713.41
30	Trinity Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$8,712.00
31	Caston Baptist Church	Booneville	\$8,618.40
32	Sand Hill Baptist Church	Booneville	\$8,460.93
33	First Baptist Church	Richmon	\$8,347.25
34	First Baptist Church	Raymond	\$8,266.66
35	Walhall Baptist Church	Laurel	\$8,211.00
36	Calvary Baptist Church	Walhall	\$8,086.00
37	Sylvania Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$8,074.44
38	First Baptist Church	Raleigh	\$8,074.44
39	Topish Baptist Church	Clinton	\$7,861.48
40	Calvary Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$7,525.00
41	Spring Creek Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$7,516.16
42	Spring Creek Baptist Church	Collinsville	\$7,416.02
43	Topeka Baptist Church	Quitman	\$7,289.51
44	First Baptist Church	Paycune	\$7,210.19
45	Indian Springs Baptist Church	Laurel	\$7,081.03
46	Hurley Baptist Church	Hurley	\$6,883.10
47	Valden Baptist Church	Valden	\$6,711.14
48	Parkway Baptist Church	Clinton	\$6,683.41
49	Branch Baptist Church	Morton	\$6,382.05
50	First Baptist Church	Louisville	\$6,375.00
51	Bovine Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$6,276.89
52	First Baptist Church, Lyman	Herrando	\$6,263.10
53	X-Tended Missions Network	Crossview	\$6,257.00
54	Crossview Baptist Church	Brandon	\$6,252.05
55	First Baptist Church	Hazlehurst	\$6,226.61
56	First Baptist Church	Brandon	\$6,135.00
57	First Baptist Church	Richmon	\$6,068.00
58	First Baptist Church	Yazoo City	\$6,045.50
59	First Baptist Church	Sardis	\$6,009.50
60	Hurricane Creek Baptist Church	Sandy Hook	\$6,000.23
61	Northminster Baptist Church	Jackson	\$5,992.76
62	Rock Hill Baptist Church	Brandon	\$5,982.23
63	Pleasant Hill Baptist Church	Midway	\$5,984.79
64	Midway Baptist Church	Hollandale	\$5,974.06
65	Hollandale Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$5,700.00
66	First Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$5,602.00
67	Valley Grove Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$5,599.22
68	First Baptist Church	Meadvile	\$5,580.94
69	Faith Baptist Church	Meridian	\$5,563.15
70	Thrasher Baptist Church	Booneville	\$5,524.65
71	Leaf River Baptist Church	Collins	\$5,507.06
72	Broadmoor Baptist Church	Collins	\$5,425.00
73	Mount Zion Baptist Church-Tate	Madison	\$5,375.00
74	Forest Baptist Church	Independence	\$5,341.00
75	Old Pearl Valley Baptist Church	Forest	\$5,277.50
76	First Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$5,200.00
77	Shiloh Baptist Church	Greenville	\$5,181.30
78	First Baptist Church	Port Gibson	\$5,175.10
79	Temple Baptist Church	Senatobia	\$5,165.00
80	Old Silver Creek Baptist Church	Hattiesburg	\$5,150.00
81	First Baptist Church	Silver Creek	\$5,086.60
82	Deer Creek Baptist Church	Rolling Fork	\$5,085.00
83	Valley Park Baptist Church	Valley Park	\$5,085.00
84	New Light Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$5,082.95
85	Springfield Baptist Church	Morton	\$5,046.27
86	Desoto Baptist Church	Shubuta	\$5,027.00
87	West Kemper Baptist Church	De Kalb	\$5,008.67
88	First Baptist Church	De Kalb	\$5,005.00
89	First Baptist Church	Petal	\$4,973.57
90	First Baptist Church	Nettleton	\$4,905.00
91	First Baptist Church	Natchez	\$4,800.00
92	Clarke-Venable Baptist Church	Decatur	\$4,800.00
93	Stanton Baptist Church	Natchez	\$4,736.49
94	First Baptist Church	Savanna	\$4,715.00
95	Anchor Baptist Church	North Greenwood	\$4,696.00
96	North Greenwood Baptist Church	Greenwood	\$4,696.00
97	Pleasant Grove Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$4,629.00
98	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	Bruce	\$4,625.00
99	North Winona Baptist Church	Winona	\$4,515.75
100	Highland Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$4,424.70
101	Magpie Creek Baptist Church	Jayess	\$4,424.70
102	Frederia Baptist Church	New Albany	\$4,393.00
103	Grays Creek Baptist Church	Herrando	\$4,364.04
104	Westwood Baptist Church	Meridian	\$4,326.87
105	Mount Zion Baptist Church	Columbus	\$4,325.00
106	Carrollton Baptist Church	Carrollton	\$4,211.25
107	Clinton Baptist Church	Clinton	\$4,181.34
108	First Baptist Church	Abbeville	\$4,143.36

109	Rocky Point Baptist Church	Carthage	\$4,126.67
110	County Line Baptist Church	Union	\$4,102.94
111	Liberty Baptist Church	New Albany	\$4,094.00
112	Dry Creek Baptist Church	Mendenhall	\$4,071.00
113	Church Road Baptist Church	Horn Lake	\$4,011.30
114	Main Street Baptist Church	Hattiesburg	\$4,008.54
115	Dublin Baptist Church	Carson	\$4,003.50
116	Mars Hill Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$4,000.00
117	First Baptist Church	Union	\$3,984.42
118	First Baptist Church	New Albany	\$3,974.03
119	Tyertown Baptist Church	Tyertown	\$3,959.63
120	Briar Hill Baptist Church	Florence	\$3,952.23
121	Eastwood Baptist Church	Indianola	\$3,861.93
122	Parkway Baptist Church	Houston	\$3,854.85
123	High Hill Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$3,850.75
124	Ackerman Baptist Church	Ackerman	\$3,839.00
125	Pineview Baptist Church	Laurel	\$3,803.76
126	Mount Zion Baptist Church	Meridian	\$3,773.61
127	Goodwater Baptist Church	Maage	\$3,769.98
128	Neshoba Baptist Church	Union	\$3,754.11
129	First Baptist Church	Eupora	\$3,744.08
130	First Baptist Church	Belzoni	\$3,721.65
131	Bucanina Baptist Church	Meridian	\$3,695.40
132	Silver Springs Baptist Church	Oryza	\$3,625.00
133	Liberty Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$3,600.00
134	Central Baptist Church	McNeill	\$3,568.92
135	New Hope Baptist Church	Gulfport	\$3,568.57
136	Unity Baptist Church	Harrisville	\$3,489.13
137	New Hope Baptist Church	Coxworth	\$3,460.00
138	First Baptist Church	Long Beach	\$3,444.38
139	Indian Springs Baptist Church	Petal	\$3,435.00
140	Providence Baptist Church	Ackerman	\$3,430.53
141	Shiloh Baptist Church	Louisville	\$3,424.35
142	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$3,351.80
143	Steeple Hollow Baptist Church	Poplarville	\$3,350.37
144	First Baptist Church	Foxworth	\$3,347.30
145	First Baptist Church	Holly Springs	\$3,297.00
146	Arm Baptist Church	Forest	\$3,290.84
147	Ephesus Baptist Church	Byram	\$3,260.00
148	Hillcrest Baptist Church	Eupora	\$3,251.63
149	Tommolen Baptist Church	Canton	\$3,194.00
150	First Baptist Church	Prentiss	\$3,175.00
151	Phall Baptist Church	State Line	\$3,174.08
152	Fairview Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$3,155.94
153	First Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$3,117.47
154	Trinity Baptist Church	Tyertown	\$3,105.00
155	Attala Baptist Association	Lexie Baptist Church	\$3,091.00
156	Lexie Baptist Church	Beacon Street Baptist Church	\$3,077.04
157	First Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$3,073.00
158	First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$3,058.81
159	First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$3,051.24
160	First Baptist Church	Woolmarket Baptist Church	\$3,049.92
161	First Baptist Church	Ingomar Baptist Church	\$3,047.44
162	Chaparral Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$3,042.93
163	First Baptist Church	New Albany	\$3,001.00
164	West Philadelphia Baptist Church	Brandon	\$3,000.00
165	Woolmarket Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$2,999.00
166	Ingomar Baptist Church	Greenwood	\$2,970.01
167	Meadow Grove Baptist Church	Eupora	\$2,960.82
168	West Jackson Street Church	Isola	\$2,959.17
169	Calvary Baptist Church	Indianola	\$2,912.00
170	First Baptist Church	Booneville	\$2,908.25
171	First Baptist Church	De Kalb	\$2,902.25
172	First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$2,900.00
173	Liberty Baptist Church	Clinton	\$2,870.81
174	West Shady Grove Baptist Church	Mendenhall	\$2,865.88
175	Wheeler Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$2,857.44
176	First Baptist Church	Goodman	\$2,836.42
177	First Baptist Church	Blue Springs	\$2,814.05
178	First Baptist Church	Newhebron	\$2,808.83
179	First Baptist Church	Meridian	\$2,768.44
180	First Baptist Church	Jackson	\$2,732.73
181	First Baptist Church	Myrtle	\$2,713.00
182	First Baptist Church	Carthage	\$2,710.00
183	First Baptist Church	Inverness	\$2,703.23
184	First Baptist Church	Carthage	\$2,682.24
185	First Baptist Church	Walnut	\$2,674.96
186	First Baptist Church	Arkabutla	\$2,662.44
187	First Baptist Church	Batesville	\$2,650.00
188	First Baptist Church	Marathon	\$2,633.00
189	First Baptist Church	Prentiss	\$2,625.86
190	First Baptist Church	Ruleville	\$2,622.00
191	First Baptist Church	Up-Lo	\$2,605.00
192	First Baptist Church	Bruce	\$2,591.00
193	First Baptist Church	Okolona	\$2,588.01
194	First Baptist Church	Louisville	\$2,575.00
195	First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$2,560.00
196	First Baptist Church	Oakvale	\$2,551.00
197	First Baptist Church	Oakland	\$2,526.96
198	First Baptist Church	Corinth	\$2,503.12
199	First Baptist Church	Terry	\$2,499.05
200	First Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$2,488.90
201	First Baptist Church	Belzoni	\$2,472.00
202	First Baptist Church	Ethel	\$2,467.99
203	First Baptist Church	Maage	\$2,434.22
204	First Baptist Church	McComb	\$2,430.53
205	First Baptist Church	Louisville	\$2,427.45
206	First Baptist Church	Pontotoc	\$2,400.00
207	First Baptist Church	Carrollton	\$2,392.83
208	First Baptist Church	Roxie	\$2,358.95
209	First Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$2,341.76
210	First Baptist Church	Louisville	\$2,338.58
211	First Baptist Church	Calhoun City	\$2,335.00
212	First Baptist Church	Byhalia	\$2,330.34
213	First Baptist Church	Louisville	\$2,330.19
214	First Baptist Church	French Camp	\$2,329.55
215	First Baptist Church	Carrollton	\$2,327.11
216	First Baptist Church	Booneville	\$2,306.00
217	First Baptist Church	Ripley	\$2,299.92
218	First Baptist Church	Georgetown	\$2,283.00
219	First Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$2,272.00
220	First Baptist Church	Jackson	\$2,260.00
221	First Baptist Church	Greenwood	\$2,253.00
222	First Baptist Church	Mantee	\$2,242.00
223	First Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$2,235.00
224	First Baptist Church	Macomb	\$2,203.00
225	First Baptist Church	West Point	\$2,203.43
226	First Baptist Church	Herrando	\$2,200.00
227	First Baptist Church	Bay Springs	\$2,199.00
228	First Baptist Church	D'O	\$2,196.10
229	First Baptist Church	Jackson	\$2,185.00
230	First Baptist Church	Callman	\$2,166.66
231	First Baptist Church	Chumby	\$2,150.00
232	First Baptist Church	Salatita	\$2,140.75
233	First Baptist Church	Columbia	\$2,115.00
234	First Baptist Church	Smithville	\$2,113.85
235	First Baptist Church	Taylorsville	\$2,100.00
236	First Baptist Church	Maage	\$2,100.00
237	First Baptist Church	Blue Springs	\$2,100.00
238	First Baptist Church	Gulfport	\$2,095.00
239	First Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$2,087.29
240	First Baptist Church	French Camp	\$2,085.74
241	First Baptist Church	Kolosa Springs Baptist Church	\$2,080.00
242	First Baptist Church	Berea Baptist Church	\$2,073.83
243	First Baptist Church	Bethel Baptist Church	\$2,072.86
244	First Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$2,072.86

252	Bogue Chitto Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$2,060.00
253	Brewer Baptist Church	Shannon	\$2,058.93
254	Souenliver Baptist Church	Enterprise	\$2,058.93
255	Leaf River Baptist Church	Forest	\$2,055.00
256	New Hope Baptist Church	Sumrall	\$2,049.00
257	First Baptist Church	Amory	\$2,040.00
258	Calvary Baptist Church	New Augusta	\$2,040.00
259	Interstate Baptist Church	Shaw	\$2,035.07
260	Tusculum Baptist Church	Booneville	\$2,023.86
261	Pope Baptist Church	Pope	\$2,002.00
262	Short Creek Baptist Church	Yazoo City	\$2,000.00
263	Arbor Grove Baptist Church	Houston	\$2,000.00
264	Union Baptist Church	Union	\$1,995.00
265	Sallis Baptist Church	Sallis	\$1,967.92
266	Alta Woods Baptist Church	Jackson	\$1,959.32
267	Cumberland Baptist Church	Maben	\$1,950.00
268	First Baptist Church	Ellistown	\$1,946.61
269	Ellistown Baptist Church	Flora	\$1,946.61
270	Calvary Baptist Church	Blue Springs	\$1,946.00
271	Fellowship Baptist Church	Corinth	\$1,940.68
272	Sylvia Rena Baptist Church	Enterprise	\$1,940.00
273	First Baptist Church	Water Valley	\$1,937.00
274	Navilla Baptist Church	Cleveland	\$1,916.67
275	First Baptist Church	McComb	\$1,907.97
276	Courtland Baptist Church	Pascagoula	\$1,906.70
277	Moak's Creek Baptist Church	Courtland	\$1,903.00
278	Mesa Baptist Church	Summit	\$1,892.71
279	Sturgis Baptist Church	Tylertown	\$1,878.79
280	Flat Top Unity Baptist Church	Sturgis	\$1,878.79
281	Crane Creek Baptist Church	Picayune	\$1,868.47
282	First Baptist Church	Perkinston	\$1,867.55
283	Harmony Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$1,854.49
284	Shiloh Baptist Church	Louisville	\$1,845.00
285	Sebastopol Baptist Church	Big Creek	\$1,840.56
286	Harmony Baptist Church	Sebastopol	\$1,831.54
287	Glenfield Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$1,810.57
288	Cartersville Baptist Church	New Albany	\$1,800.00
289	Friendship Baptist Church	Petal	\$1,800.00
290	Bethel Baptist Church	Sturgis	\$1,800.00
291	Morgan Chapel Baptist Church	Poplarville	\$1,790.00
292	County Line Baptist Church	Sturgis	\$1,783.89
293	Center Hill Baptist Church	Carmine	\$1,778.03
294	Union West Baptist Church	Ecru	\$1,776.18
295	McCool Baptist Church	Oxford	\$1,766.20
296	Macedonia Baptist Church	McCool	\$1,750.81
297	Star Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$1,750.00
298	Barnes Baptist Church	Star	\$1,750.00
299	Parkview Baptist Church	Bruce	\$1,746.92
300	Eton Baptist Church	Leland	\$1,732.00
301	Wynndale Baptist Church	Macoon	\$1,730.00
302	Zion Hill Baptist Church	Terry	\$1,715.31
303	Silcoam Baptist Church	Blue Springs	\$1,714.26
304	Bethel Baptist Church	Etta	\$1,711.97
305	Good Hope Baptist Church	Richton	\$1,704.06
306	Harrisburg Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$1,700.00
307	Lebanon Baptist Church	Ripley	\$1,700.00
308	Calvary Baptist Church	Quitman	\$1,700.00
309	Shugulak Baptist Church	Shugulak	\$1,696.00
310	First Baptist Church	McComb	\$1,695.00
311	Providence Baptist Church	Hattiesburg	\$1,694.83
312	Bethany Baptist Church	Potts Camp	\$1,693.01
313	New Prospect Baptist Church	Iuka	\$1,690.74
314	Eastside Baptist Church	Pearl	\$1,688.66
315	Memphis Baptist Church	Lucedale	\$1,683.50
316	New Hope Baptist Church	Mount Olive	\$1,682.83
317	New Palestine Baptist Church	Alcorn	\$1,680.00
318	Prentiss Baptist Church	Picayune	\$1,678.00
319	Desoto Hills Baptist Church	Prentiss	\$1,674.14
320	Lone Star Baptist Church	Southern	\$1,665.13
321	Cedar Grove Baptist Church	Collins	\$1,645.00
322	Calvary Baptist Church	Tena	\$1,624.93
323	Tuscola Baptist Church	Newton	\$1,624.93
324	Driver's Flat Baptist Church	Lena	\$1,621.03
325	Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church	Oxford	\$1,600.00
326	Salem Baptist Church	Oxford Springs	\$1,600.00
327	Morgantown Baptist Church	Collins	\$1,594.00
328	Good Hope Baptist Church	Natchez	\$1,592.97
329	Diamondhead Baptist Church	Jamden	\$1,587.00
330	Crowder Baptist Church	Diamondhead	\$1,582.94
331	Standing Pine Baptist Church	Crowder	\$1,579.07
332	West Riple Baptist Church	Walnut Grove	\$1,575.76
333	Beulah Baptist Church	Columbia	\$1,567.20
334	Immanuel Baptist Church	Decatur	\$1,563.00
335	Cornerstone Baptist Church	Greenwood	\$1,560.00
336	Good Creek Baptist Church	Batesville	\$1,557.34
337	Honeshoe Baptist Church	Guntown	\$1,542.58
338	New Hope Baptist Church	Tichenor	\$1,542.00
339	First Baptist Church	Meridian	\$1,530.00
340	Morrison Chapel Baptist Church	Coffeeville	\$1,510.00
341	Union Baptist Church	Cleveland	\$1,509.70
342	First Baptist Church	Lumberton	\$1,507.77
343	Bethany Baptist Church	Prentiss	\$1,504.60
344	Trinity Baptist Church	Fulton	\$1,500.00
345	West Riple Baptist Church	Ripley	\$1,500.00
346	West McComb Baptist Church	McComb	\$1,500.00
347	Auburn Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$1,500.00
348	Good Hope Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$1,500.00
349	First Baptist Church	Elitville	\$1,500.00
350	Roundaway Baptist Church	Doddsville	\$1,500.00
351	Crystal Springs Baptist Church	Tylertown	\$1,500.00
352	Farmhaven Baptist Church	Canton	\$1,497.58
353	Scotland Baptist Church	Winona	\$1,495.28
354	Calvary Baptist Church	Petal	\$1,489.59
355	Calvary Baptist Church	Summit	\$1,486.40
356	Pine Hill Baptist Church	Enterprise	\$1,485.62
357	Temple Baptist Church	Myrtle	\$1,481.20
358	Mount Vernon Baptist Church	Newton	\$1,480.00
359	Improve Baptist Church	Columbia	\$1,467.30
360	New Providence Baptist Church	Hazlehurst	\$1,452.00
361	County Line Baptist Church	Walnut	\$1,447.75
362	Golden Central Baptist Church	Golden	\$1,445.00
363	Mount Carmel Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,434.28
364	Skene Baptist Church	Skene	\$1,434.00
365	Success Baptist Church	Saucer	\$1,431.24
366	Springhill Baptist Church	Lumberton	\$1,429.00
367	Wellman Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$1,428.35
368	Mount Pleasant Baptist Church	Mc Pleasant	\$1,423.62
369	West Corinth Baptist Church	Corinth	\$1,420.31
370	Assassant Ridge Baptist Church	Dumas	\$1,419.50
371	First Baptist Church	Brooklyn	\$1,418.20
372	Mantee Baptist Church	Mantee	\$1,411.00
373	Pleasant Grove Baptist Church	Woodland	\$1,400.00
374	First Baptist Church	Tenita	\$1,400.00
375	White Oak Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$1,386.05
376	Oakland Baptist Church	Walnut	\$1,381.46
377	South Crossroads Baptist Church	Iuka	\$1,375.00
378	Bogue Chitto Baptist Church	Tylertown	\$1,371.49
379	Mount Horeb Baptist Church	Collins	\$1,371.00
380	Causeway Baptist Church	Meridian	\$1,367.34
381	Oak Dale Baptist Church	Pontotoc	\$1,355.63
382	County Line Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$1,355.28
383	Mount Olive Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$1,335.18
384	Perkinston Baptist Church	Perkinston	\$1,350.00
385	Highland Baptist Church	Jackson	\$1,349.95
386	Gooden Lake Baptist Church	Belzoni	\$1,345.00
387	Silcoam Baptist Church	Meadville	\$1,344.00
388	Shady Grove Baptist Church	Lucedale	\$1,336.48
389	Longview Heights Baptist Church	Olive Branch	\$1,334.64
390	Longview Baptist Church	Belden	\$1,328.00
391	Sumter Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,327.38
392	Victoria Heights Baptist Church	Victoria	\$1,324.37
393	Macedonia Baptist Church	Mendenhall	\$1,319.60
394	New Prospect Baptist Church	Broomhall	\$1,310.00

Religious minorities victims of 'horrific atrocities'

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — The governments of Iraq and Egypt have failed to protect the freedoms of religious minorities, resulting in "horrific atrocities" against historic Christian communities, a religious freedom advocate testified Jan. 20 — just days before Egypt erupted in protests and violence.

Nina Shea, a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom along with Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, appeared before Congress' Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission less than a week after an Egyptian court handed down a death sentence to a man convicted in a January 2010 attack in which six Christians and a Muslim guard were killed in the city of Nag Hamadi.

Shea told the congressional panel, "The Oct. 31 violent siege of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Baghdad, Iraq, during Sunday mass and the New Year's Day bombing attack against Coptic Christians emerging from a church service in Alexandria, Egypt, sent shock waves around the world."

The "horrific atrocities," Shea said, "did not occur in a vacuum."

"In Egypt, for the past two years, we've seen a dramatic upsurge in attacks against Copts, while in Iraq, churches have been targeted at least since 2004, and while the violence in the country has decreased overall, attacks against the Christians have increased," Shea said.

"This fall, an al-Qaeda group has explicitly linked the Christian communities of Iraq and Egypt in its threats to kill Christians. Clearly, the governments of both nations have failed to ensure the right to freedom of religion or belief, especially for religious minorities, including Christian communities which have been in Egypt and Iraq for nearly 2,000 years," Shea said.

On Jan. 16, Mohammed Ahmed Hassanein, also known as Hammam

al-Kamouni, received a death sentence on first-degree murder and terror-related charges for the 2010 attack in Nag Hamadi, the Associated Press reported. The State Security Court, whose rulings cannot be appealed, is expected to announce verdicts against other two defendants in the case next month.

The death sentence in the 11-month trial came quickly on the heels of a Jan. 1 suicide bombing in which 21 worshippers were killed at a church in the port city of Alexandria, the AP noted. Egypt's top security official has blamed the Army of Islam in the Gaza Strip for the attack.

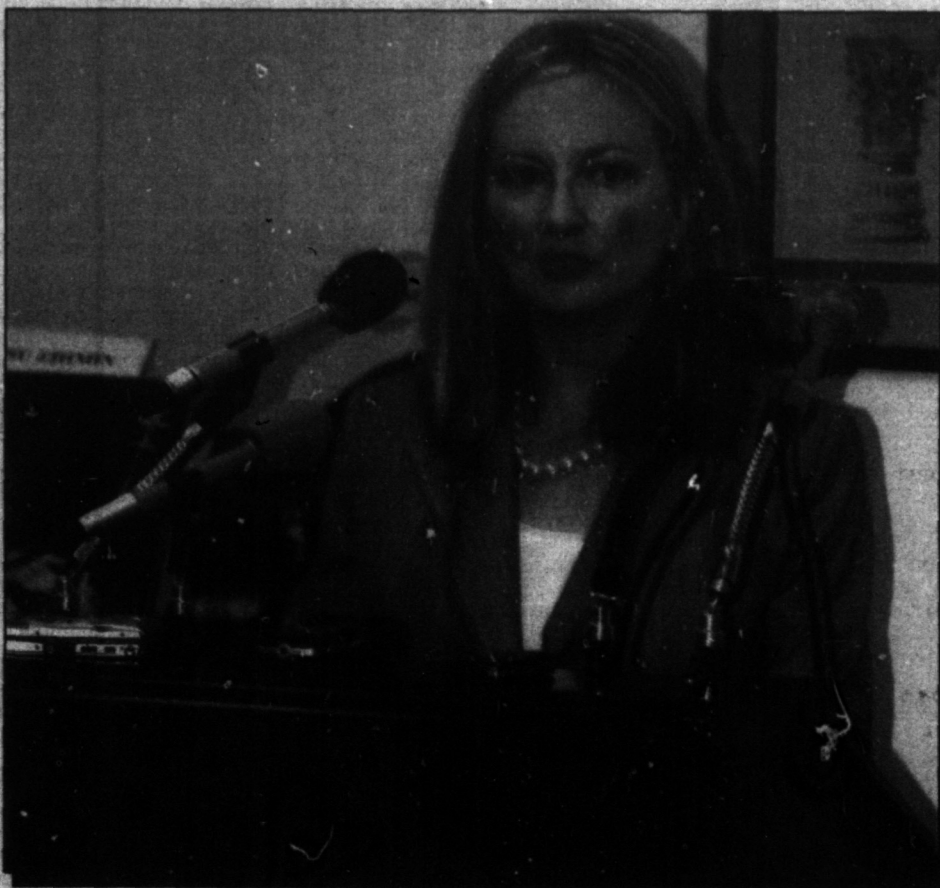
Muslim-Christian stress in Egypt was further intensified by a Jan. 11 incident in which an off-duty police officer opened fire on a train in southern Egypt, killing a 71-year-old Christian man and wounding five others, including the man's wife.

Shea told Baptist Press she sees the death sentence as "tokenism."

"There are a number of attacks on Christians not being prosecuted, and the case in which the death sentence was handed down is not finished," Shea said. "There are two other defendants still on trial."

The Jan. 11 attack of this year, Shea noted in her congressional testimony, is yet another evidence of "a longstanding, deeply entrenched pattern of impunity in attacks against Christians."

"There are government measures that discriminate against Christians and allow them to be scapegoated. You regularly see incitements to violence against Christians in government-



BP file photo

Shea

owned media, including wild conspiracy theories about Christians preparing to take over Egypt. It creates an atmosphere of intimidation and incitement to violence against Christians," Shea said.

Christians make up about 10% of Egypt's estimated 80 million population and regularly complain that police ignore discrimination and violence against them. The Associated Press noted the government has tried

to calm Christian fears, freeing dozens of Christians detained after November 2010 rioting over construction of a church building in a Cairo suburb and beefing up security outside churches.

In a widely publicized celebration in mid-January, President Hosni Mubarak presented one of the nation's highest honors to a famous Christian surgeon, the AP reported.

Bills working way through Congress would dial back abortion funds

WASHINGTON (BP) — Pro-life members of Congress reinforced Jan. 20 their intention to prohibit federal funding of abortion by introducing two bills, one that would accomplish the feat across the board and one that would do so in last year's health-care law.

The introduction of the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, H.R. 3, and Protect Life Act, H.R. 358, came one day after the House of Representatives voted 245-189 to repeal the health-care measure dubbed "Obama-care" by its critics.

One of the reasons for the effort to rescind the 2010 law was its authorization of subsidies for insurance plans that cover abortion.

The No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, which was introduced by Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., with 161 cosponsors, would institute a permanent, government-wide ban on federal funds and subsidies for abortion. It would

serve to standardize bans on abortion funding that now exist in various federal programs, many of which have to be approved each year, and make certain the prohibition extends to all agencies.

The Protect Life Act, introduced by Rep. Joe Pitts, R-Pa., with 89 cosponsors, would amend last year's Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to bar federal money from paying for abortion or abortion coverage.

Speaker of the House John Boehner called Smith's bill "one of our highest legislative priorities" and designated it as H.R. 3 to demonstrate its importance. "A ban on taxpayer funding of abortion is the will of the people and ought to be the law of the land," Boehner said at a Jan. 20 news conference.

The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) urged about 90 House members to sign on as original cosponsors of the government-wide funding ban.

"We find it unconscionable that a single taxpayer dollar be funneled for abortion," ERLC President Richard Land said in a Jan. 19 letter to the House members. "With the adoption of the [Smith] bill, concerns on abortion funding would be significantly abated."

If approved by the House, both legislative pieces face unpromising prospects in the Senate, which is not as pro-life as the House. In addition, President Obama would be expected to veto either bill that reached his desk.

Smith and Pitts both appealed to Obama regarding their proposed bans. "President Obama said he wants abortions to be rare. To Mr. Obama I say, 'Here is a bill for you.'"

Smith cited a report by the Guttmacher Institute — a pro-choice research organization — that a ban on government funding of abortion reduces the number of procedures by 25%.

Pitts said Obama agreed with the goals of the bills and

demonstrated it by issuing an executive order "trying to prove his support for prohibiting federal funding for abortion" after he signed health-care reform into law in March.

"If he chooses to stand by his word, he should have no problem signing both bills into law," Pitts said of the president.

Pro-life advocates inside and outside the House reject Obama's executive order as ineffective. They point out the president could rescind his order at any time, and they contend the federal courts would rule in favor of the language in the law, not that in the executive order.

The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) also challenged Obama. "If President Obama seeks to obstruct these bills, that will provide additional glaring evidence that his professions of opposition to public funding of abortion are phony," NRLC Legislative Director Douglas Johnson said in a written statement.

Johnson also said, "Public opinion is strongly against federal subsidies for abortion, and any member of Congress who is truly opposed to federal funding of abortion will vote for both of these bills."

Smith's bill also would institute conscience clause protections for pro-life, health-care workers. Rep. Dan Lipinski of Illinois is the lead Democratic cosponsor on both Smith and Pitts' bills.

In another pro-life effort to halt abortion-related funding, Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind., introduced Jan. 7 the Title X Abortion

Provider Prohibition Act, H.R. 217. Pence's bill would bar Title X family planning money from going to organizations that perform abortions.

That would include Planned Parenthood of America, the leading Title X recipient and the country's No. 1 abortion provider.

As of Jan. 21, Pence's bill had 149 cosponsors.